

There is a quote by Henry Thoreau that goes, 'If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.'

*Location, Location, Location: Heaven* is not a compilation of sermon notes, but rather the coming together of Clive's life and learning with the creativity and inspiration of heaven. The insights are simple in nature and yet profound and worthy of deep contemplation. Like Jesus, who took everyday articles and remoulded them into instruments of teaching and inspiration, so too Clive crafts everyday life into teaching challenges for us. Using Scripture, history, biblical culture and psychological insights, Clive drafts outlines our imaginations can take hold of and expand on.

'If we rely on the occasional word of God we hear in church once in a while, we are like starving cattle getting a bite of hay once in a while.'

In Townsville as summer approaches, the land is parched, the grass is brown and one can well visualise cattle searching for something more satisfying and sustaining. So too with Clive's words; if we but read them just once as sermon notes, we will not be fed. So I recommend *Location, Location, Location: Heaven* as a work to be read and re-read – something to be mulled over and used to inspire you to greater hunger for God.

May God bless you as you soak in the words, images and challenges Clive presents before you.

**Reverend Barry Cox**  
*Presbytery Minister Administration*  
*Presbytery of North Queensland*  
*Uniting Church in Australia*

\* \* \* \* \*

I had the privilege of working with Clive as part of a ministry team in a vibrant parish in Townsville. If Clive was down to preach, I observed that he had the habit of always printing out the readings and reflecting on them all through the week, an exercise that many preachers would do well to emulate. I knew Clive as a man of prayer and deep pastoral warmth, who was alert to what was going on in the society around him. His sermons always reflected those commitments, which he has maintained over fifty years of ordained ministry in the Anglican Church in country and urban parishes, as well as a stint in Bamaga, Cape York, among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. You can sense that breadth of experience lovingly distilled and served up in these pithy sermons. Savour and enjoy them as they warm your heart, encouraging you in your walk with God.

**Reverend Simon Hattrell**  
*Coordinator of the Anglican Bishop's Certificate in Theology and Ministry*  
*in the Diocese of Tasmania*  
*Past Principal of Tabor College, Hobart*

The chapters of *Location, Location, Location: Heaven* are great study outlines. They are a joy to use. The steady progress in clearly annotated Bible passages brings each theme to life. We have had great discussions and times of sharing in getting to know, love and serve our Lord more fully.

I confidently commend this book to leaders of Bible studies.

**Beth Pidsley**

*Bible Study Co-leader, St James' Village, Heatley, Townsville*

\* \* \* \* \*

Twenty-two years ago, when we first arrived at what felt like 'the end of the earth' in Bamaga after three days of bull dust and corrugated roads, we were met by our outreach contacts with huge smiles and warm hospitality; we immediately felt at home in their company. We have been blessed to enjoy the friendship of Clive and Beth ever since. In fact if we could see 'not so dimly' I'm sure much of our ministry rides on the prayer and support of this couple.

When you know Clive, hear his insights, and observe his character and love for the Lord, it's natural to see *Location, Location, Location: Heaven* emerge as a book. Clive Brook is one of those blokes with an 'I won't quit' spirit. His perseverance and love for the word, commitment to the church (in holistic terms) and the relatable, well-balanced intelligent way about him makes him a rare and attractive character.

We commend Clive's book to you.

**Robyn and Ken Mulligan, OAM**

*Directors, YWAM, Townsville, Queensland*

\* \* \* \* \*

These sermons are a joy to read because there is nothing pretentious; there is no self-seeking glory, only simple, down-to-earth, God-filled wisdom and revelation.

I have known Father Clive Brook for many years and consider him like a second father, whose love, Christ-like behaviour and godly example are cherished.

As I read these sermons, the reality of Clive's Christ-centred journey, despite much hardship and struggle in life, becomes clearer and something desired.

I highly commend this compilation of sermons.

**Paul Smith**

*Missionary and ministry leader, YWAM, Butuan, Philippines*

LOCATION • LOCATION • LOCATION

# Heaven

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One preacher's guide  
to holy living

Clive Brook

  
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*I dedicate*  
Location, Location, Location: Heaven  
*to Almighty God*  
*who created me.*

*I pray that his Holy Spirit will use it*  
*to touch the hearts of many people*  
*and inspire them in his love and service.*

Clive Brook

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# FOREWORD

When I was at teachers' college, one of the lecturers said just before we graduated that we had to make a decision. The decision was whether we were going to have twenty years' experience as a teacher or one year's experience, repeated twenty times. At the time I thought, 'What a challenge!' but over time I have come to realise 'How true'. I am very aware that with the three lectionary cycles, clergy can have three years' preaching experience repeated several times, rather than fifty or however many years' experience.

When we read the twenty-nine sermons of the Reverend Clive Brook in *Location, Location, Location: Heaven*, we can see that Clive has had fifty plus years' experience in ministry. His ministry has informed his preaching. In each sermon Clive has sought to make meaningful hermeneutical connections – that is, to make the biblical text relevant to those who are listening. In doing so, Clive has challenged how we live as Christians and how we minister as a church.

It was Dietrich Bonhoeffer who wrote the book *The Cost of Discipleship*. Clive has picked up on this theme and challenged the complacency of our day and age. He has related the issues that the Apostle Paul and other biblical authors had to address in their day and age in proclaiming the gospel to our situation today. In each of these sermons you cannot say, 'That's nice'; rather, you are challenged, not only by what has been written but, to go back to the biblical text and reflect more deeply.

These sermons were not preached in cathedrals or for great occasions in the life of the church or the community. They were preached in a church in a suburb of a regional city in Australia as well as in a small regional country town. In both cases these sermons were preached to people who struggle with the daily issues of life. These sermons are simple but profound. They are challenging and thought provoking. They relate Scripture text to daily life. They are sermons that you mull over, ponder and pray about during your daily work, whatever your physical location here on earth. However, they also challenge us about how we use the free will God has blessed us with and whether we are heaven focused.

I commend this book of twenty-nine sermons to you; may you not only be blessed but challenged. Thank you, Clive, for the lifetime of experience as you have walked with the Lord.

**Bishop Bill Ray**  
*Bishop of North Queensland*  
*The Feast of the Transfiguration, 2015*

# INTRODUCTION

When I started writing these notes, I had no idea that I was starting a book. I was just making some notes to help me preach sermons, and looking for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as I put each one together over a few days. They were not intended to be much more than a series of points to enable me to hold the sermon together.

People asked for my notes and found inspiration in reading them. Because they were written for preaching rather than reading, they are concise and sharp. Sermons are spoken to the congregation with the preacher's attention primarily focused on the hearers, so I use clear, well-spaced notes that I can read at a glance. These texts have been adapted for readers, but some sense of this spacing has been retained. Hopefully, this will provide the reader with the opportunity to appreciate the spiritual vision in the notes.

If the reader takes time to reflect and meditate on the notes, guided by the Holy Spirit, they will no doubt receive inspiration beyond what is in the notes.

I have incorporated ideas and inspirations that I have gained over fifty years of ministry, in the hope that they may be of some use to the church in the twenty-first century.

Bible quotations are from the New International Version unless indicated otherwise. If a quote is repeated in the same sermon, the reference is only given the first time.

I thank Bishop Bill Ray for his support and encouragement.

I thank my niece, Rachel Froude, and Roslyn Kiernan for their contributions to editing the manuscript, and also Sue Van Homrigh for her cover design.

I thank my dear wife, Beth, for her support and patience.

***Clive Brook***



# AUTHOR'S NOTE

## **To Bible study leaders**

My Bible study group has found these chapters stimulating study material. Each chapter makes an inspiring Bible study. As you lead, ask people to reflect and comment on each section.

## **To preachers**

Please, don't pick up this book and think, 'I will preach one of Clive's sermons.' It won't work.

On the other hand, you may find an inspiration in these pages that the Lord wants you to use.

Pray your way into your sermon.

Preach from your heart as well as your head.

Your task is to speak to people with the love of Jesus, so that people can receive the love of God and respond to it in their heart.

Seek the Lord's guidance every step of the way.

Let him show you what Bible reading he wants you to preach on.

Meditate on that passage and plumb its depths.

(Who wrote it? What was the background? Who was he addressing? What is the Lord saying in this passage?)

A study Bible or commentary may help, but primarily meditate and pray your way into it.

Give yourself time: write a bit, pause, pray and wait for the inspiration for the next section.

If you want your sermon to touch people, love your congregation.

Of course you can love them; they are the body of Christ.

Jesus loves them, so you can love them (even if you have never met them before).

If you can't love them, there is no point in you preaching.

They won't hear you. Get out of the pulpit and make room for someone who will love them.

Sermons are best preached in a conversational style.

Hang loose on your notes; if you slavishly read every word, they become boring. A little humour in the delivery helps, but don't tell a joke to get their attention. That is a waste of time.

If you illustrate each major point in your sermon with a Bible quotation, you know you are on sound theological ground.

Pause when appropriate: a few seconds of silence will emphasise your point.

May God bless you and inspire your preaching.

# 1.

## A PAIN IN THE NECK

*To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me.*

*(2 Cor 12:7, NIV 1984)*

Saul's heart was wholly committed to God.

As a Pharisee, he thought it was his God-given duty to persecute Christians and have them killed.

Then Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, and Saul's heart did a complete backflip.

He suddenly knew that Jesus was God's Son – the Saviour of the world.

Saul dedicated his heart one hundred percent to serving the Lord Jesus, and became known as Paul.

He confounded the Jews by preaching Jesus in the synagogues.

He offended the Greeks by telling them that the idols they worshipped were false gods.

He offended the Romans by telling them that Caesar was not a god to be worshipped at all.

He called on them all to open their hearts to Jesus.

Paul knew he had to worship and honour the Lord God Almighty and Jesus, his Son. They could whip him, stone him and imprison him, but that did not stop him. He would just go to the next town and preach Jesus again.

At Lystra, he was stoned so heavily that they dragged his body out of town and left him for dead.

The disciples gathered around him, no doubt to pray; and Paul got up and went back into the city (Acts 14:20).

God loved Paul and gave him a special blessing to strengthen him for his ministry.

He was caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor 12:2).

He was caught up into paradise; he heard inexpressible things that a human is not permitted to tell (2 Cor 12:4).

Paul was privileged to have a foretaste of heaven. It filled him with great joy, yet he recognised the danger that it would make him conceited.

So he did not say much about it. He was given a ‘thorn in the flesh’, a counterbalance to keep him humble.

This thorn in the flesh was a messenger of Satan.

There has been much speculation about Paul’s thorn in the flesh. Some translators have mistakenly called it a ‘painful physical ailment’ (2 Cor 12:7, GNT).

But in the Old Testament, similar phrases such as ‘barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides’ (Num 33:55) refer to people who cause trouble.

We have a similar expression in English when we refer to someone as a ‘pain in the neck’.

Paul does not give us any indication about who was causing him trouble, who his ‘pain in the neck’ was – but they troubled him a lot.

Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.  
(2 Cor 12:8)

But the Lord did not take them away.

They continued to trouble Paul.

Jesus told him,

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. (2 Cor 12:9)

Jesus knew that it was tough for Paul; he also knew that taking the problem away from Paul was not the best option.

He knew that if Paul faced the challenge, and wrestled with the distress it was causing him, he would seek the Lord’s help and be strengthened by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit would make issues clearer for him and show him the way forward. In the process he would become spiritually stronger and wiser.

That is why Jesus could say, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’

Paul was weak – he was unable to manage the challenge these people presented.

Paul in his weakness needed Jesus’ power to come in and strengthen him – so that he could grow.

Paul got the message; so he wrote:

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor 12:9–10)

Paul was not the only one to be troubled by a difficult relationship.

We can all encounter difficult people, even aggressive people, at home, or at work – at sport, or at a party when someone gets high on grog or drugs.

Such people are a pain in the neck!

This can be a real challenge to us.

What do we do?

We could get angry and fight back.

Would that help?

We could walk away.

That option is not always available.

We can face the problem with Jesus and let him guide us.

In Proverbs 15:1 we read,

A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Jesus loves the person who is causing us difficulties.

Jesus wants to help them overcome whatever is upsetting them.

Often, anger stems from deep inside the trouble-makers, rather than from anything we have said or done.

Paul's thorn in the flesh was a messenger of Satan. The people responsible were being inspired by the devil to create trouble for Paul.

You may be getting attacked for no other reason than your love for Jesus.

I certainly have experienced that sort of aggression.

When someone is creating trouble it is hard to see the good side – but there is a good side.

The Psalmist knew this when he wrote:

Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word ...

It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees.

(Psalm 119:67, 71)

We certainly learn more and grow closer to the Lord in times of trouble than we do in happy joyous times.

In Hebrews we read,

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy.

(Heb 12:14)

God wants us to be peacemakers.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

(Mt 5:9)

*Location, Location, Location: Heaven*

That is a challenge for us, particularly when we are feeling upset or angry.  
God is calling you and me to make every effort to live in peace with all  
people and to be holy.

*Preached in St Paul's Anglican Church, Charters Towers, Qld, on 5 July 2015.*

## 2.

# ARE YOU AFRAID?

*Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, [David] slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.  
(1 Samuel 17:49)*

What a sight!

There was the army of Israel drawn up in battle array, frozen by fear. Opposite them was the Philistine army. They had a giant warrior called Goliath.

There was a custom at that time for an army to send out one warrior, who would challenge their opponent to send one soldier to fight him in single combat.

Goliath challenged the Israelites day after day for someone to come out and fight him.

They just stood there in fear.

No-one had the courage go out and fight Goliath.

He was too big; he was too strong.

They were scared stiff.

King Saul was not going to fight Goliath. He was just as scared as everyone else.

Along came David, the shepherd boy.

He quickly weighed up the situation.

He could not understand why they were all scared.

This Goliath might be huge, but he was a heathen who worshipped pagan gods and idols.

David understood that the underlying issue was a battle of the gods: the pagan gods of the Philistines versus the LORD God Almighty, worshipped by Israel.

David knew the LORD God Almighty. He was not frightened of the heathen, who only worshipped idols.

David told King Saul that he would go and fight the heathen. His brothers were offended by their upstart young brother and told him to go back home and look after the sheep.

As a shepherd, David had confronted and killed lions and bears on his own. He said to Saul:

Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. (1 Sam 17:36)

It was all a matter of perspective.

The Israelites had a human perspective. They were confronted with a giant of a warrior who was obviously stronger and more powerful than they were.

They had no heart to go out and fight him.

Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified (1 Sam 17:11).

But David saw a heathen man – one who worshipped pagan gods with no power.

David knew the power of the living God, the LORD Almighty.

He said:

Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God? (1 Sam 17:26)

David knew that the power of the living God was infinitely greater than the powerless gods of the Philistines.

Therefore, he could go out and kill Goliath – even though he had no military training.

King Saul agreed to let David go out and fight Goliath.

He may well have had a cynical attitude, perhaps thinking *he is only a boy* – so it didn't matter if he got killed.

King Saul dressed David as a soldier and put armour on him, so that at least he looked the part.

Maybe that would give him a chance.

David saw that this approach could never work.

He was not in his comfort zone. He was not used to all that armour and he could hardly walk.

More importantly, it was putting trust in material things. But material weapons were not going to win this battle.

He knew it was the spiritual power of the LORD God that was going to give him the victory, not any sword or armour.

He took all the armour off, put on his shepherd's clothes and picked up his stick and slingshot.

He went down to the brook and picked up five smooth stones.  
They had to be smooth stones, polished by years of tumbling in running water.  
Smooth stones fly straight.  
Rough stones with jagged edges cannot be relied on.

When Goliath, the warrior, saw David coming out, he looked with contempt on the shepherd boy who came to fight him.

And Goliath declared,

Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field. (1 Sam 17:44, NASB)

David responded by declaring,

This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. (1 Sam 17:46, NASB)

So the battle was engaged.

It was short-lived.

David put a smooth stone in his sling and let it fly – no doubt with all his strength.

More than that –

I reckon it flew with divine assistance straight into Goliath's forehead.

Goliath fell down on his face.

David rushed up, grabbed Goliath's sword and cut his head off.

The Philistine army was astonished to see their giant warrior slaughtered by a shepherd boy.

They had not recognised that the power of the living God was with the shepherd boy.

They panicked and fled, chased by the Israelite army.

What do we learn from this?

There is more to life than the physical.

The Israelite soldiers were simply looking at the massive challenge that Goliath the giant presented.

Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

They were so caught up in fear that they could not see any hope.

In the Gospel of Mark (Mk 4:35–41), the disciples became so bound up with fear when the storm was swamping into the boat that they panicked and woke Jesus, saying,

‘Teacher, don't you care if we drown?’



They saw the storm and the waves crashing down on the boat.  
They could only see one possible outcome from their predicament.  
They were going to drown; that was their material expectation.  
They had not considered the spiritual resources available to them.  
They had the Son of God in the boat.  
They woke Jesus, not out of a sense of hope, but out of despair.  
Jesus rebuked the storm and it became calm.  
Then he said to the disciples,  
‘Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?’

Like the disciples, we need to learn to trust God in difficult situations and with insurmountable problems.

What are you afraid of?

The spiritual authority and power of God is far greater than our limited resources.

He is able to handle the problem you are facing.

Fear binds you up; it prevents you from thinking or doing anything positive.

David saw clearly the spiritual dimensions of the situation.

He knew that he and the LORD God could overpower this pagan giant.

So he stepped up and brought Goliath down.

Jesus took control of the storm that had the disciples so worried.

You and the Lord Jesus can handle every challenge this world and the devil throws at you.

When you know that, you are not dismayed by what turns up.

You prayerfully face it with confidence and peace, and the LORD will guide you through to a good outcome.

Indeed, more than a good outcome – a perfect outcome.

The apostle Paul understood this. That is why he wrote in Romans 8:28:

We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

*Preached in St Paul’s Anglican Church, Charters Towers, Qld, on 21 June 2015.*